



CJCS Guidance for 2011

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to relay my priorities for our strategic objectives for 2011. This document directs the Joint Staff and informs the Joint Force.

Intent

The following priorities will direct our course. We will contribute to stability and defend our vital national interests in the broader Middle East and South Central Asia. We will improve the Health-of-the-Force by caring for our people and their families and by restoring our readiness. And, we will continue to balance global strategic risk by maintaining a ready, forward presence that can deter and defeat aggression and respond to contingencies.

Priorities and Strategic Objectives

Defend Our Vital National Interests in the Broader Middle East and South Central Asia

Over the last year, the balance of our resources and effort shifted from the war in Iraq to the one in Afghanistan. As reaffirmed in the Afghanistan and Pakistan Annual Review, our strategic objective is to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qa'ida in the region and to prevent its return to either Afghanistan or Pakistan. The surge in U.S. forces has helped arrest Taliban momentum in some places, though we have not yet seen a fundamental shift in momentum necessary to deny al-Qa'ida safe haven and prevent them from threatening U.S. or ally interests. In addition, Afghan security forces are growing in size and capability. Meanwhile, the Pakistan government has taken significant steps in combating extremist groups, and al-Qa'ida senior leadership in Pakistan is weaker than at any other point since it fled Afghanistan in 2011.

Going forward, we will continue to erode Taliban influence, work with the Afghan government to facilitate reintegration and reconciliation of former insurgents, continue to strengthen the capacity of Afghan security forces, work with interagency partners to build and sustain effective governance, and work with Pakistan to ultimately defeat al-Qa'ida and its extremist allies. While the Afghan National Army is growing in size and capability, the development of police forces must improve. Defeating al-Qa'ida requires denying them safe haven, to which Pakistan plays a critical role. We will lay a foundation for a strategic partnership with Pakistan, which is undertaking a strategic shift to combat domestic extremism and has

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improved its military operations. In the process, they have suffered the loss of thousands of lives over the last year. We are committed to developing a strong, enduring relationship with Pakistan. To this end, we also recognize India's important role in South Central Asia, welcome its steady contributions to regional stability, and applaud the ministerial talks between India and Pakistan. The next year will be critical, but our commitment to all our regional partners is enduring.

We will seek to further improve coalition and Joint Force unity-of-effort to support this conflict. Allied and partner contributions are critical to our success, and we thank them for their sacrifices. We must continue to push our best talent forward and provide continuity through programs like AfPak hands. Services and Combatant Commands outside of CENTCOM must prioritize resources to fully support the fight.

We must continue to transition well in Iraq and lay the foundation for a long-term partnership between our two countries. This year, Iraqi forces assumed primary lead for its security. In turn, we have reduced our military presence in Iraq to below 50,000 troops and transitioned to a role of advising, assisting, training, and conducting select counter-terror operations. This process was carried out safely, while preserving stability, and is a tribute to all those who have served in Iraq.

The end of our combat mission in Iraq does not mean the end of our security commitment there. Iraqi security forces have made great improvements, but will require external assistance for years to come. The focus of our assistance will shift from Iraq's internal domestic security to its external national defense. We will help build Iraqi defense capability that carefully considers the interests and sensitivities of all Iraqis as well as Iraq's neighbors. Our forces will continue their responsible draw down through December 31, 2011 in accordance with the US-Iraq Security Agreement. As our military draws down, a robust Office of Security Cooperation will form the cornerstone of our security partnership with the Iraqis. We must ensure this transition is adequately resourced to get it right.

This transition in Iraq has allowed us to alter our posture and focus in the Gulf and in the Levant. We are working in both areas to build the capabilities of legitimate security forces, defeat transnational and sub-state militant groups, and combat the spread of WMD and related materials. The most significant threat to regional stability remains an Iranian regime that seeks the development of nuclear weapons, even as it continues to support terrorist organizations and acts throughout the broader Middle East. Accordingly, and in keeping with the President's *National Security Strategy*, we will reassure our partners and allies through our efforts to build their defense capabilities and capacity. We

will continue to plan for a broad range of military options should the President decide to use force to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear arms. Pursuant to that, we will maintain – as we have maintained – a robust force presence in the Gulf region.

Improve Health-of-Force

My health-of-force priorities are to care for our people and their families, and restore readiness. The strain on our families and service members will remain high. In particular, special operations forces, the Marines, and the Army continue to deploy abroad in significant numbers and none of them will reach 1:2 deploy-to-dwell ratios until at least the end of 2012.

The lack of dwell time inhibits forces from conducting the training necessary to carry out the full range of military operations and to be prepared for a wider range of contingencies. I will issue instructions that we adopt "Total Force Fitness" - a methodology for changing the way we understand, assess, and maintain our people's well-being and sustaining our ability to carry out our missions.

Our ongoing campaigns abroad have amplified the challenges associated with returning from combat. The tragic risks of suicide, divorce, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress, domestic violence, and homelessness are likely to get worse before they get better.

Despite increased attention, suicide remains a severe challenge for every service. This is a difficult, vexing, and complex problem that only leadership can reverse. Continued work in the government and private sectors must be done on the prevention of suicide. Leaders must also improve their systematic understanding of the problem's scope, including the signs, symptoms and vulnerable population. We must work to end the stigma that prevents our service members, their families and veterans from seeking help early, and simplify the number and complexity of the programs we currently offer. No matter how hard, no matter how long, no matter what it takes, the military will pursue this problem with urgency and compassion.

Traumatic brain injury and post traumatic stress have become similarly devastating, affecting hundreds of thousands of service members and veterans over the past decade. In many ways, these issues are the greatest threat to our people. We can only effectively move forward by establishing care that includes public and private partnerships.

Leaders must take preventative measures to identify and address these and other issues, such as focusing more attention on reducing the incidence of sexual assault. Across health-of-force issues, we should do

more to tap the “sea of goodwill” that exists in our Nation’s communities and civil society organizations in support of our wounded, returning veterans, and their families. Active donor programs in different communities are unknown or not aligned. Each senior leader on the Joint Staff, including myself, will travel to his or her hometown in the next year and speak to these issues. I encourage Services and Combatant Commands to do the same.

We seek to create a continuum of health care that seamlessly spans active duty and veteran status. But we must balance our commitment to provide health care with better management of its escalating costs. Resolving this tension will require constant attention and cooperation between myself and the Chiefs, and coordination with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Department of Veteran Affairs.

But health-of-force goes beyond our people—we must restore readiness. Readiness is the ability to provide and integrate capabilities required by combatant commanders to execute their assigned missions. It must remain a top priority, as our forces, systems, and capabilities will continue to endure extraordinary stress. Restoring readiness will help restore our strategic depth, which has been degraded by nine years of continuous combat. A further degradation in readiness for the full range of military operations would undermine our ability to fulfill our national defense objectives—an unacceptable risk.

We must develop more effective ways to improve and assess joint and unit readiness. Training and exercises must become more joint, interagency, and multinational. We will develop new strategic concepts for cyclic readiness that define an available force pool required to deter conflict and respond promptly in contingencies. We will convert requirements into deployable capabilities more quickly and effectively, synchronizing force-providers with force-commander needs.

Integral to restoring readiness is identifying and implementing efficiencies throughout the military, so that we can focus our resources where they matter most. We must avoid becoming a hollow force, with large force structure that lacks the readiness, training, and equipment needed to fight effectively. As we restore readiness, we must focus on quality and capabilities, while maintaining our technological edge. Every service must take up this cause, without competition and with collaboration to ensure we remain a whole, joint force.

Ultimately, people are more important than platforms and must continue to be the higher priority. We should identify whether we are retaining the right quality of people, particularly young officers and senior NCOs, down

at the unit level. And if we are not, we must implement new programs to do so.

Balance Global Strategic Risk

We must continue to balance global strategic risk by maintaining a ready, forward presence and available forces that can meet the full scope of our security commitments. Since our top priority this year is success in Afghanistan, our air and maritime forces must shoulder additional responsibilities and provide the primary capabilities to balance global strategic risk elsewhere.

In the response to an aggressive North Korea and a more assertive China, our efforts to balance risk have increasingly focused on Asia. We will demonstrate responsible military leadership in the region that both reassures our allies and partners and strengthens the international norms that serve the interests of all nations. We will closely monitor the uncertainty stemming from political succession in North Korea and maintain a robust deterrent against future provocations. We seek to resume appropriate military-to-military relations with China in order to prevent miscommunication and foster cooperation on areas of mutual interest. We will be prepared to support and defend our freedom of navigation and access to the global commons. Our partners and allies are our greatest strategic asset in the region. We will work with them to conduct multilateral exercises and operations that enhance broader regional stability.

We face additional challenges and opportunities elsewhere around the globe. We must continue to support local efforts to combat the extremist threat that emanates from places like Somalia, Yemen and North Africa. To do so, we will complement U.S. and international development, governance, and rule of law efforts—the true bedrock of a sustainable counter-terror strategy. In Europe, we will also implement a new NATO Strategic Concept by placing increased emphasis on cyber security, ballistic missile defense, and nonproliferation. U.S. and NATO will engage Russia in a number of common challenges.

The past year has demonstrated that balancing global strategic risk requires an agile and adaptive joint force that can respond to contingencies across the globe. We responded to a number of environmental and natural disasters including an earthquake in Haiti, the oil spill in the Gulf, and floods in Pakistan. These efforts advanced whole-of-nation capabilities and fostered cooperation by the international community. Though we cannot pin-point where the next crisis will arise, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief contingencies reinforce the need to sustain a full-spectrum force.

Balancing global strategic risk also requires improving our capabilities to operate in cyberspace. We are lagging behind in addressing this threat—both as an institution and as a Nation. Over the last year, we made significant headway by standing up Cyber Command and by further evaluating and normalizing our constructs for cyberspace operations. Going forward, we must continue to secure the 'mil' domain. This requires that we focus on developing cyberspace doctrine, making our command and control more responsive to both global and regional needs, and establishing authorities that are more responsive to combatant commander requirements. We must develop for cyberspace the kinds of rigorous tactics, techniques, procedures and other traditional constructs that we employ in other operational domains. Cyberspace also requires new institutional, legal, and procedural ways of thinking. In turn, we will support broader U.S. government efforts to develop effective cyber norms that will contribute to our Nation's cyber security. Finally, we must carefully review how to best recruit, train, retain, and utilize our cyber-warriors.

Lastly, our engagement across the globe would be greatly enhanced by wholesale reform of security sector assistance. Our security assistance is designed for another era: authorities are inflexible, resources are insufficient, and processes are too cumbersome for addressing today's security challenges. The laws and regulations surrounding security assistance are one of the major barriers to better and more substantial partnerships and a pooled-resources approach to foreign assistance. We must better coordinate resources that are dedicated to the cause of national security, and ask Congress to reform these authorities. We seek to make resources more fungible across departments and programs, integrating defense, diplomacy, development, and intelligence.

This year's *Chairman's Risk Assessment* and *National Military Strategy* will frame our approach to defending our nation against the full range of threats and address our own vulnerabilities. We will also publish *Joint Force 2030* to ensure our institution is preparing for future conflicts.

Conclusion

In providing my best military advice over the past three years, I have emphasized as a rule that military activities must support rather than lead foreign policy. It is in this way that the military can best advance our nation's enduring interests, as delineated in the *National Security Strategy*. We will continue to work closely with the State Department and USAID to implement the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, particularly in areas of conflict prevention and response. We have

learned from the past nine years of war that we serve best when we are part of a coordinated approach that employs all elements of national power. By operating hand-in-hand with allies and partners, supporting the interagency, and working with outside organizations, we will provide the Nation with the security the Constitution guarantees.

As we advance these priorities, our professionalism must remain beyond reproach. The American people, and their political leadership, closely scrutinize our conduct, and rightly so. Respect for them – and for our oath – demands that we continue to remain an apolitical instrument of the state. That means being apolitical in our acts and in our words, whether outside the wardroom, on the flightline, within the barracks, or in the halls of the Pentagon. Over nine years of close quarter combat has changed many aspects of what we do. It must not change who or what we are as a professional, disciplined force.

Indeed, strength of character is the heart of our armed forces. It is a strength that comes from the remarkable diversity of the citizens we protect and those that serve. An all-volunteer service should reflect the society it protects. We will continue to value the diversity and inclusivity of our armed forces. I look forward to working with Secretary Gates and the Service Chiefs to prepare and certify the joint force to implement the new law that repeals 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' I commit to making sure the process is well-led, maintains our combat readiness, and upholds our high standards.

Thank you for your superb performance during a critical time in our Nation's history. Your sustained and unwavering investment of intellect, time, and energy has enabled me to provide my very best advice to the President and the Secretary of Defense.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. G. Mullen", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

M. G. MULLEN
Admiral, U.S. Navy